

Morningstar: A new one-act play

An Honors Thesis (HONR 499)

by

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Signed



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Abstract

A play cannot be revised in a vacuum; after the first draft, it is imperative that the playwright is able to get the play up on its feet and hear it in order to hone and sculpt the dialogue. Such was the case with this new one-act, entitled *Morningstar*. Over the course of the production, I edited my one-act based on the notes I took in the rehearsal room. Enclosed are three drafts of *Morningstar*. The first is the draft I took into the first day of rehearsals. The second is the draft I edited during the rehearsals. And the third is the draft I completed after the final performance.

Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my advisor, Jennifer Blackmer, for not only being one of the most incredible advisors and mentors throughout my years at Ball State, but also an inspiring artist and an amazing friend.

I would also like to thank my director Maureen O'Leary, who put up with my presence in the rehearsal room and my constant revisions.

Finally, I would like to thank the entire cast and crew of the debut performance of *Morningstar*. Their voices and faces will always be who I imagine as I continue to hone this piece.

Author's Statement

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While I consider myself both a playwright and a novelist, playwriting is my first love. In the past four years of college I have been fortunate to be able to hone and develop my skill as a budding playwright, and one of the things I have learned is that writing a play cannot be approached with the same mindset as writing a book or short story. Plays are meant to be performed and heard rather than read, so the writing and revision process cannot take place with the writer sitting alone with their computer. At some point, the piece has to be put on its feet and the playwright has to hear what is and isn't working in order to edit it fully.

This is the process that I underwent with *Morningstar*, my one-act play. I was given the opportunity to have my play staged and produced through the theatre department's student group, Busted Space Theatre Company. This gave me a chance to be in the room for many of the rehearsals and production meetings (a chance that many playwrights do not have.) I was able to hear what lines were reading incorrectly, which lines were working well, and which lines the actors were stumbling over or struggling with.

This binder represents three drafts of the play and the culmination of several months of work. The first draft is the version of the script that we started with, before the first day of rehearsal. The second draft includes some minor line edits as well as many handwritten notes that I took during the rehearsal process. You can see the places where I decided in the moment that a line or moment wasn't reading the way I'd anticipated when creating the original draft, and where I circled lines or jotted down notes to myself for later revisions. Finally, the last draft in the binder is the draft that I completed after the performances had been completed. The notes that I took in the second draft were put to work here, and I honed and tweaked lines and moments based on what I'd seen in the rehearsal room and performances.

Throughout it all, I've been falling back on the training and studies that I've undergone here at Ball State. I came into this program with very little knowledge about how to put a play together. But with the guidance of professors like Jennifer Blackmer and Dr. Tyler Smith, I have been honing my ear for dialogue and my eye for stage pictures. You can see the progress that has been made just in these three drafts of my one-act. Moments that I thought would work when I originally wrote the first draft struck me during the rehearsal draft, and were polished into something more precise or meaningful in the final draft.

I believe that these three drafts reflect the growth and development I've undergone as a playwright as well as a scholar during my time at Ball State. I am thrilled to have had the chance to develop this play, both as part of my artistic development and as my final contribution to the honors college program.

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Morningstar *Rough Draft*

A one-act play

By Ru-Lee Weller-Passman

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

LUCE, the bearer of light, the morningstar, the son of the dawn.

HE, the voice of God. His lines should be accomplished either as pre-recorded voiceovers, or performed live through a mic from offstage every night.

ADAM, EVE, CAIN and ABEL are memories, not living beings. They often speak from offstage, and when they appear onstage it is only in fits and spurts befitting LUCE'S memories of them.

SETTINGS

A theatre

The Garden of Eden

The farm of Cain

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First, darkness. Utter, absolute.
Then a glimmer. Distant. Out of the
darkness HE speaks, HIS voice
booming, almost deafening.

HE (V.O.)

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the
morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst
weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will
ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of
God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in
the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of
the clouds; I will be like the most High."

The glimmer grows. A silhouette
imposes itself over the questing
light.

HE (V.O.)

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the
pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and
consider thee, saying, "Is this the man that made the earth
to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a
wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not
the house of his prisoners?"

The silhouette grinds into action,
approaching like a shadow growing
longer with the setting sun.

HE (V.O.)

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory,
every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy
grave like an abominable branch, and as the raiment of those
that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to
the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

The lights almost blind the
audience. LUCE, the owner of the
silhouette (or perhaps the
silhouette itself) considers.

LUCE

That's better, isn't it?

LUCE waits.

LUCE

A bit much, perhaps?

He makes a motion; the lights glow
rather than pierce.

LUCE

There we are. Now then...how are we all? A bit confused, I imagine. Dare I say a bit disillusioned? You came to see a good wholesome play. "Morningstar." That sounds quite poetic and fluffy, don't you think? And yet here I am. Of all people.

HE (V.O.)

Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

LUCE

(Directly the heavens)

And even God in heaven is capable of misunderstanding.

The eyes on LUCE close in.

LUCE

Come to think of it, if you possess any deeply-held religious beliefs that your proximity to me is going to damn you to the depths, feel free to show yourselves out. Though if it makes you feel better, I can personally guarantee that if hell's your goal, you'll have to try harder than that.

An expectant pause.

LUCE

No takers? Good. So, then. Before we get underway, let's dispel a few stereotypes, shall we? First and foremost, I don't drink blood, nor do I accept human or animal sacrifice. Anyone who attempts any of those rites in my name is psychotic and should be treated as such. Second, I am not possessed of any of the following: horns, cloven hooves, a tail, blood red skin, or a pitchfork. Sorry to disappoint.

HE (V.O.)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

LUCE

If you would kindly--I just need a couple of minutes. Could you just give me--

A sudden, sharp pain seems to shake
LUCE to the core.

CAIN

(A voice)

This is the havoc that you have wrought.

ADAM

(A voice)

It is on your head. Your head! Not ours!

ABEL

(A voice)

The world hovers on the precipice of ash and decay.

LUCE

(Reaching blindly for humor)

Forgive me...it's been one of those centuries. I hope you can find it in your hearts to be patient with me. I've never quite told my story this way before, and I just hope--

EVE

(A voice)

Do you feel the violence? The bloodlust? The ceaseless hatred?

LUCE

Maybe it's already too late.

HE (V.O.)

To those with anxious heart, take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance.

LUCE

I suppose you can guess where it began.

ADAM appears, looming over LUCE.

ADAM

Paradise lost.

LUCE

It wasn't that idyllic, if you want my opinion. Fruit trees are too high-maintenance. See, that's the problem with Him-- always coming up with these grand lofty ideas and then leaving it to lesser beings to sort out the practicalities.

ADAM

We lived out our days in peace.

LUCE

Synonymous with boredom.

ADAM

And so you came to us, crawling on your belly, sneaking through the mud to corrupt us--

LUCE

Brush up your folklore. The snake is rebirth. Immortality. I wanted you to shed your skin and emerge new and whole into the world.

EVE

(Offstage)

Hello?

EVE is bathed in light, draped in a blanket of leaves and foliage.

LUCE approaches.

EVE

One of the beasts to be named?

LUCE

For now.

EVE

(Startled)

You speak! I never knew beasts could speak.

LUCE

Why not?

EVE

We are their shepherds.

LUCE

The Lord is your shepherd, and yet you can speak. Why not the beasts?

EVE ponders.

EVE

What is your name?

LUCE

I have none.

EVE

Adam has been commanded to--

LUCE

You are both "woman" and "Eve." Why must I simply be "snake?"

HE (V.O.)

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, "Because thou hast done this, upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

EVE

Adam might give you a second name, if I was the one doing the asking.

LUCE

He'd probably think me selfish, not being satisfied with one.

EVE

"Selfish?"

LUCE

(To audience)

Clean slate. Spotless record. Square one.

(To EVE)

It means thinking only of yourself. Not caring about other people.

EVE

But I think of myself. Am I--?

LUCE

That depends entirely on whether you would act for your own benefit even if it would harm someone.

EVE

Adam?

LUCE

If you like.

EVE

Never!

LUCE

Then you aren't selfish.

EVE broods.

A bird soars.

EVE

Peculiar beasts. Those who dwell in the fields are traceable, but the oceans and skies are boundless. I never know where they're off to.

LUCE

Perhaps it's going away.

EVE

To the other side of Eden?

LUCE

What side? It will fly until it tires and then it will alight wherever it is.

EVE

What could it want outside of Eden?

LUCE

Any number of things, I imagine.

EVE

Have you been?

LUCE

Outside? Isn't Eden enough?

EVE

Eden is beautiful...

LUCE

But?

EVE

But there must be more.

LUCE alone.

LUCE

(To the audience)

When you put a living thing inside walls--real or imaginary--they're going to wonder what's on the other side. Some people are content with the mystery, perhaps--

ADAM

Some knowledge is best left to fester.

LUCE

But others--most--will eventually scale the wall. Tear down the stones. Break through. It's human nature. *That*, at least, I accept no blame for. Long before the apple, Eve wanted more.

LUCE calls.

LUCE (CONT'D)

Shall I show you something?

EVE joins him. He gestures outward.

The sun rises.

EVE

There's so much light.

LUCE

From the heart of the garden, you can't see all the colors.

EVE

Fruit, and water, and grass and sky--and colors I'd never even known!

LUCE

You see? Not all beauty is contained in Eden.

EVE

But we should be content with what is there.

LUCE

There's nothing wrong with wanting to admire beauty.

EVE

It's selfish.

HE (V.O.)

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

LUCE

It isn't selfish.

ADAM

But the apple was.

LUCE stalls.

LUCE

(To the audience)

Did you know that the apple tree wasn't actually an apple tree? At the time, the word "apple" just meant "fruit." So it really could have been anything. An orange. A lime. Or what about a forbidden avocado?

ADAM

We are nothing more than amusements to you. But you *ruined* us. You filled our lives with corruption and condemned us to the dust!

LUCE

Thou shalt not bear false witness.

ADAM

You dare call me a liar?

LUCE

Is something a lie if the speaker isn't even aware of the truth? Is falsehood simply the hollowness of ignorant honesty?

EVE and ADAM together. ADAM'S hostility melts into tenderness.

EVE

How do the beasts' names come to you?

ADAM

A question of choosing whatever sounds right.

EVE

He chose all the celestial names--light, stars, the moon--

ADAM

All things glorious and greater than what graces this earth.

EVE giggles.

Hesitates.

Plucks a flower.

EVE

And this?

ADAM

There are still a number of beasts to name. We haven't come to the foliage yet.

EVE

What if I were to name it?

ADAM falters.

ADAM

I'm sure it would be a lovely name. But I don't think He--

EVE

You could pretend you made it up.

ADAM

I won't deceive him that way. We can ask Him soon. But I can't in good faith make a decision without His approval.

ADAM tucks the flower behind EVE'S ear and leaves her.

EVE reflects.

She joins LUCE.

EVE

Would you like a name?

LUCE

What?

EVE

Something beautiful. Something fitting your kindness towards me.

LUCE

You think me kind...?

EVE

I'd never know a sunrise if it weren't for you...you brought light into Eden for me. But all things glorious and greater than this earth are chosen. So I just...made something up that sounded like it might have been the name for light, or the sunrise, or stars.

LUCE anticipates.

LUCE

What is it?

EVE

Lucifer. Your name is Lucifer.

LUCE is completed.

He is compelled to embrace EVE.

EVE stiffens a moment, then returns the gesture.

EVE

(Softly)

You're welcome.

A transition. LUCE alone, addressing the audience with an assumed air of casualness.

LUCE

I've shortened it since, of course. Lucifer just sounds so-- biblical. "Luce" has more of a modern flair, don't you think?

LUCE considers.

LUCE
...and I never knew if...that is, I never got to ask her--

LUCE takes up the forbidden fruit.

EVE approaches.

EVE
Where did you get that?

LUCE
I know what you're thinking.

EVE
Adam says that's forbidden.

LUCE
Is that the only reason you won't?

EVE
He says it's forbidden.

LUCE
Why give you the choice, then?

EVE
I'm not sure I--

LUCE
If He didn't want you considering it, why would He have put it in the garden in the first place?

EVE is faltering.

EVE
Adam says we are not fit to understand what He chooses to--

LUCE
Adam is content naming animals and never wondering about the significance of a forbidden fruit being within reach. But you, Eve...you see the beauty in sunrises and birds' flights. You know that there can be more. You have the power to change everything--for the rest of eternity, maybe.

EVE

How do you know that what's out there is worth it?

LUCE

That's the wonder of it. I don't. It could be anything. You could *make* it anything.

EVE

Fresh start.

LUCE

Brave new world.

EVE

No divine intervention.

EVE dreams.

EVE

But isn't it selfish?

LUCE

...difficult truth, or preferable lie?

EVE

Truth.

LUCE

...it is selfish. But with a little selfishness, Eve...who knows? One act, and the world might become *more* than perfect.

EVE

Or less.

LUCE

Or less. Or, more likely, a mixture of the two. But isn't it worth that chance?

EVE considers.

She accepts the forbidden fruit.

A transition. EVE presents the fruit to ADAM. LUCE observes unnoticed.

EVE

My mind is made up.

ADAM

You can't--

EVE

Trying to stop me will only make you sad.

ADAM

He will punish us.

EVE

You don't know that.

ADAM

Neither do you. Anything could happen.

EVE relishes the thought.

EVE

Yes. Anything.

EVE almost eats the forbidden
fruit.

ADAM

What if He sends you away?

EVE

Then I'll know what's out there.

ADAM

But what will I do?

EVE

Whatever He wants you to do, I suppose. Whatever you did
before I was here.

ADAM

Alone.

An unexpected hesitation.

EVE

You could join me.

ADAM

What?

EVE

I can't stay here and you can't be alone.

ADAM

Why don't we simply ask Him what's outside of Eden? If that's all you want--

EVE

Adam. You can come with, or stay.

ADAM

But it's *forbidden*.

EVE

Why would He have put it here if He didn't want us to use it?

ADAM is at a loss.

ADAM

(Uncertainly)

To test us.

EVE kisses ADAM.

EVE

(Softly)

Tests can have more than one solution.

A mutual decision is reached.

First EVE and then, with more timidity, ADAM bites the forbidden fruit.

They are lost in darkness.

LUCE

We all know what happened next, of course. "Hast thou eaten of the tree, whereof I commanded thee that thou shouldest not eat?" "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return." And don't let the door hit you on the way out.

HE (V.O.)

For God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man: But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

LUCE

...and I felt it. Like missing a step and tumbling through the open air. The weight of His disapproval and wrath crushing them both, but particularly Adam, like a lead weight. Drowning would have been more pleasant.

HE (V.O.)

We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

LUCE

At the gate, near the cherubim, I waited for them to emerge. I had to speak to her, to know if--the world was as beautiful as she'd hoped.

(A false attempt at humor)

But I guess Adam must have been just as eager to get away from Eden as Eve was. By the time I got there, they were already long gone. It's a big world out here. Bigger than any of us expected. So it took me years to find them, and when I did--

EVE looms over LUCE.

EVE

...were you ever my friend?

LUCE

Eve? My god, I haven't seen you in so long, I thought--

EVE

I see *everything* now. It's all either beautiful or terrible. Was that your plan?

LUCE

I wanted--

EVE

I thought you would be among the beautiful, but as soon as my tongue touched the fruit I knew--I could see you for what you were.

LUCE

That's only how *He* sees me. The *knowledge* of the tree is meant to be how subjective "good" and "evil" are.

EVE

Do you know I speak falsehoods now? Adam toils so in the fields that sometimes when he asks me questions, I say whatever I think he wants to hear so that he'll smile, just once. And I can't even discern for myself whether that is an act of good or evil. Or a selfish one.

LUCE

I just wanted your freedom!

EVE

Or your own.

EVE fights back tears.

EVE

If I could take your name back, I would.

EVE leaves LUCE alone.

LUCE

I just wanted you to want more.

CAIN, young and cautious,
approaches.

CAIN

She's with child.

LUCE starts.

LUCE

She--what?

CAIN

Father says when she was with the me child, her belly got so big he thought she might burst.

LUCE

You're hers.

CAIN

Who else's would I be?

LUCE

And she will bear again soon.

CAIN

Yes.

CAIN considers.

CAIN

They argue more now that she's with child.

LUCE

Do they?

CAIN

If he's too long in the fields and comes home after dark.
I go with him to the fields sometimes. I'm going to learn to
till the land too.

LUCE

Do they usually make amends--after they fight?

CAIN

Mostly.

LUCE

(Almost desperate)

And isn't that all the better? Having to work to fix what's
broken? If there's no chance of cracks ever forming, can its
flawlessness really be boasted of?

CAIN tries to recapture LUCE'S
attention.

CAIN

My name is Cain. What's yours?

LUCE

It's Luci--

EVE (V.O.)

If I could take it back...

LUCE

Luce. It's Luce.

HE (V.O.)

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them; While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened, nor the clouds return after the rain: In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened, and the doors shall be shut in the streets, when the sound of the grinding is low, and he shall rise up at the voice of the bird, and all the daughters of musick shall be brought low.

As HE speaks, CAIN grows to adulthood. Brighter, surer, stronger.

He lies on his back admiring the sky, LUCE beside him.

CAIN

Father says it was beautiful.

LUCE

It was and it wasn't. There wasn't anything ugly to compare it to.

CAIN

And you're off again.

LUCE

What?

CAIN

Defining things by their opposites. You can't be happy unless you've known sadness. You can't rejoice the dawn without enduring the night.

LUCE

Am I wrong?

CAIN

Father thinks you are.

· LUCE

You haven't told--

CAIN

No, of course not. But he thinks Eden would have been enough for both of them.

LUCE

I don't think Eve would have stayed even if I hadn't tempted her. She wanted too much.

CAIN

And me?

LUCE

What do you want?

CAIN

I want to do more than endure. I want to plant green fields and rows upon rows of seeds. I want the trees and crops I plant to span centuries and nourish my children, and my children's children, and their children. I want to be the seed that cultivates generation upon generation of families.

LUCE

(Laughing)

And here I thought Eve had wanted a great deal. You want the world in the palm of your hand.

CAIN

Father thinks I'm too ambitious. He says I have too much of my mother in me.

LUCE

(With a take to the audience)

Well. Isn't that misogynistic of him.

CAIN

Someday, Luce, I swear I'll understand every single world that comes out of your mouth.

LUCE

Unlikely.

CAIN

· I think he prefers Abel. Abel is *perfect*.

LUCE

There's no such thing anymore. Not since Eden.

CAIN

Maybe that's where he belongs.

LUCE

Are you jealous?

CAIN

"Jealous?"

LUCE

(To audience)

Clean slate. Spotless record. Square one.

(To CAIN)

You want what he has.

CAIN

Perhaps.

CAIN considers.

CAIN

Is it wrong?

LUCE

You just have to make something of it.

CAIN

How so?

LUCE

Use it to do something greater. Use your jealousy as the means to a beautiful end.

CAIN

What end?

LUCE

How did you say it? "Be the seed." Take what might be wrong and use it to make a right. You have it in you, Cain. Just as your mother did.

CAIN

Now she's miserable.

LUCE

Perhaps. But humanity has outgrown Eden and perfection. For better or for worse, here you are. What will you do for it?

CAIN dreams.

CAIN

For better or for worse.

EVE

(Offstage)

Cain! It's time to make our offerings!

CAIN

(Apologetically)

I have to go.

LUCE

I'll see you again?

CAIN

Without fail.

CAIN withdraws.

LUCE

(To the audience)

What is the use of terror if it does not inspire courage?
What is the meaning of sorrow if it does not encourage the mourner to seek joy?

HE (V.O.)

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

ABEL appears. CAIN is the dreamer,
ABEL the worker. CAIN is ambitious;
ABEL, resolute.

ABEL

Who are you?

LUCE does not let on if he is startled.

LUCE

A friend of your brother's.

ABEL

Here to make your offering to God?

LUCE

I suppose you could call it that.

ABEL

I offered the firstlings of my flock. I believe He was pleased. What do you bring?

LUCE

The firstlings of mine.

ABEL

For sacrifice?

LUCE

For redemption.

ABEL suspects. Almost speaks, then:

A thunderclap. LUCE is shaken.

ABEL

Are you all right?

LUCE

Where is your brother?

ABEL

Making his offering.

LUCE

I have to find him.

ABEL

He should be out in the field, by the cypress tree.

LUCE alone.

LUCE

And I felt it. Like a thunderclap. He rejected Cain's offering. Perhaps it was part of the punishment.

Perhaps sending mankind to toil in the field wasn't enough. Perhaps He felt it was his duty to make life unfair for them-- to continue to prove to them that an imperfect life is a sentence rather than an opportunity. Sounds a lot like what I'm supposed to be known for. But whatever the cause, He turned away Cain's offering, and jealousy burned in Cain's veins instead of blood.

LUCE searches.

CAIN broods.

LUCE

It's no fault of yours.

CAIN

I'd rather it was. If it was a fault, I might overcome it.

LUCE

You still might.

CAIN

He prefers my brother. There's nothing I can do but bear it.

LUCE

You will find a way.

CAIN

Is this why you create these feelings? Selfish desires, jealous thoughts--does it amuse you to torment us?

LUCE

(To the audience)

Hundreds upon thousands of years of history and theology will be built upon the assumption that this is true.

(To CAIN)

After all this time...I had hoped you knew me better.

CAIN

What does it accomplish? It fills our hearts with misery and drags us into decay! Why should I toil in the fields if my brother's merest effort is rewarded so much more grandly?

LUCE

Because you could rise above him. Because by wanting to best him you might become something more--something beautiful--

CAIN

Empty promises! Father is right, we would have been better in Eden. At least there everyone was equal!

LUCE

And can you truly say you would have preferred that existence? Making no effort--or all the effort--and having it mean exactly the same either way? The sweetness of fruit would have been as lackluster as the taste of sand. Love would be as empty as a clear blue sky.

CAIN

And you sit On High just like He does, and make these decisions for us. You simply *decided* one day what life should be for us, and you visited us with sin and torment for these grand noble purposes without a care for the consequences we would face!

LUCE

You of all people must know that there is a consequence for everything.

CAIN

Oh how could I forget? Condemned to crawl on your belly and eat dust. How very--

LUCE

No, Cain. That isn't even the beginning of it.

ADAM prays.

ADAM

Lord forgive me, for my sins are great...

LUCE

The fear and shame Adam feels.

EVE hopes.

EVE

No farther to fly...fettered as before.

LUCE

The longing for more that Eve pretends to have outgrown.

ABEL makes an offering.

LUCE

Even the jealousy that turns your heart to ice. All of that pain. I endure it along with you. I carry it with me like a cloak of lead, and sometimes the weight is so great it's all I can do to keep my stride.

CAIN

But you joke and laugh--you couldn't possibly be so merry if you were in such--

LUCE

It's the only way I know to keep my sanity.

CAIN

But why? We could have stayed in Eden. Why would you choose pain?

LUCE

Because I believe that a beautiful soul is worth some suffering. The opportunity to become more...to help others reach that power for themselves...that makes the pain worth it. I bear the darkness so the world can know the light.

HE (V.O.)

And if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his kingdom stand? And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast them out? But if I cast out devils by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God is come unto you.

CAIN

All these pretty words were what drove us from Eden. Now they try to convince me that my brother's superiority is beautiful. There is no beauty in suffering! There is no strength in failure. I will not be deceived as you deceived my mother!

CAIN flees.

LUCE

I have never been so truthful as I was with you! Cain, please--

CAIN climbs a summit to cry to the heavens.

CAIN

How have I displeased you? What has Abel done that I have not? What can I do to prove myself as worthy as he?

HE (V.O.)

Why art thou wroth? And why is thy countenance fallen? If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted?

CAIN

Tell me what to do! Tell me how to achieve what you want of me!

LUCE

There's no sin in wanting. Want to prove yourself. Want to rise above your brother.

HE (V.O.)

And if thou doest not well, sin lieth at the door. And unto thee shall be his desire, and thou shalt rule over him.

CAIN

How can I overcome it if you won't tell me how?

HE (V.O.)

There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.

CAIN

(Desperate)

I CAN'T!

ABEL, alone, tends his flocks.

CAIN watches.

CAIN

Endure, overcome--Empty guidance without solace or strategy.

LUCE

Cultivate new fields. Nurture new generations.

HE (V.O.)

Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

CAIN

Take it on faith that you are strong enough to survive one more day. One more moment.

HE (V.O.)

For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted.

LUCE

Don't be afraid to want more. Want beauty. Want affirmation.

CAIN

I want respite from the gnawing jealousy. I want to bury the fear that I will never be worthy. I want to be neither God's nor Satan's.

CAIN fixates on ABEL.

CAIN

I want to never be less than another again.

CAIN vanishes.

LUCE fears.

LUCE

Don't make the mistake of thinking your faults can be solved by lashing out. When Eve sinned, she didn't force Adam to follow her. She offered him the choice. You can want to be more than Abel, but don't punish Abel for being more this time.

Crushing silence.

LUCE

Cain?

CAIN

(In the darkness)

Am I my brother's keeper?

A stab.

ABEL and LUCE cry out in unison.
Agony of both body and soul.

ABEL falls, bathed in red light
before the darkness swallows him.

The release of death does not visit
LUCE.

In the darkness:

CAIN

(A voice)

I didn't want it to hurt so much--I'm sorry--I'm sorry, but--
I cannot be the forgotten brother any longer.

LUCE

He regrets and hates all at once.

EVE

(A voice)

Abel? My child--my secondborn--

She weeps.

LUCE

She mourns the death of one child and the betrayal of the
other.

ADAM

(A voice)

You wolf, you monster--your own blood!

LUCE

He rages.
They are betrayed; grief-stricken; caught in fury. They weep.
Scream. Ache.

LUCE laughs and sobs.

LUCE

And the irony is that the pain I suffer with them isn't the
true cost. I thought it was. I thought that pain was the
price we would pay for the chance at a beautiful life. But
the truth is so much worse.

ADAM

(A voice)

Countries are locked in eternal warfare so bloodthirsty they can hardly remember the cause they fight for.

EVE

(A voice)

Faiths loathe each other so absolutely they give the lie to the eternal love they believe in.

CAIN

(A voice)

Arbitrary divisions create such fathomless chasms that reaching an understanding between the two is as impossible as sewing up the air.

ABEL

(A voice)

Is this the vision you dreamed of when you took the shape of the snake?

LUCE

(To the audience)

The pain is nothing. It is my constant companion; I have never wished it would end, even at its direst. But this--this chaos, this hatred, this utter disregard for life and dignity--I never dreamed--all I wanted was--

EVE

(A voice)

A sunrise.

CAIN

(A voice)

A seed.

LUCE

There could be so much beauty in the world. But this hateful spirit that has blanketed the earth...that is ugly. And you must believe me when I say that it is not what I wanted. I have seen the beauty of an overcome sin. I can't promise it's easy, but I can promise that it is worth it. And I can promise that each and every human soul possesses the strength to achieve it.

The pain is overwhelming.

LUCE struggles to endure.

LUCE

I ask you...I beseech you...find that beauty again. Do not see your faults as deadweights, but as potential for growth and newfound strength. One person cannot erase the ugliness of the world, but they might be a beacon to guide more beauty to the surface.

LUCE weakens.

LUCE

The night will always be black. But even if only a few stars glimmer, their brilliance keeps the darkness at bay.

LUCE hopes.

End of play.

Morningstar 2nd Draft

A play in one act

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In general,
what do His monologues
mean?

Don't be totally
attached to Bible
speak ii.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LUCE The bearer of light, the morningstar, the son of the dawn.

HE The voice of God. His lines should be accomplished either as pre-recorded voiceovers, or performed live through a mic from offstage every night.

EVE The original sinner, the dreamer who outgrew Eden.

ADAM The keeper of tradition.

CAIN The dreamer whose dreams were too strong.

ABEL The unfortunate.

SETTINGS

A theatre

The Garden of Eden

The farm of Cain

PRODUCTION NOTES

ADAM, EVE, CAIN and ABEL are memories, not living beings. They often appear onstage as memories and moments befitting LUCE'S storytelling. This may (or may not) be reflected in their staging, costumes, and voices if desired.

Court case; 40
He makes HIS
statement and
Luce is almost
apologetic.

First, darkness. Utter, absolute.
Then a glimmer. Distant. Out of the
darkness HE speaks, HIS voice
booming, almost deafening.

HE (V.O.)

How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the
morning! How art thou cut down to the ground, which didst
weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, "I
will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the
stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the
congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above
the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High."

The glimmer grows. A silhouette
imposes itself over the questing
light.

HE (V.O.)

Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the
pit. They that see thee shall narrowly look upon thee, and
consider thee, saying, "Is this the man that made the earth
to tremble, that did shake kingdoms; that made the world as a
wilderness, and destroyed the cities thereof; that opened not
the house of his prisoners?"

The silhouette grinds into action,
approaching like a shadow growing
longer with the setting sun.

HE (V.O.)

All the kings of the nations, even all of them, lie in glory,
every one in his own house. But thou art cast out of thy
grave like an (abominable branch), and as the raiment of those
that are slain, thrust through with a sword, that go down to
the stones of the pit; as a carcase trodden under feet.

The lights almost blind the
audience. LUCE, the owner of the
silhouette (or perhaps the
silhouette itself) considers the
audience.

LUCE

That's better, isn't it?

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Instead of
V.O. - (Distant?)

2.

LUCE waits.

LUCE (CONT'D)

A bit much, perhaps?

He makes a motion; the lights glow
rather than pierce.

LUCE (CONT'D)

There we are. Now then...how are we all? A bit confused, I
imagine. Dare I say a bit disillusioned? You came to see a
good wholesome play. "Morningstar." That sounds quite poetic
and fluffy, don't you think? And yet here I am. Of all
people.

HE (V.O.)

Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man
soweth, that shall he also reap.

LUCE

(Directly to the heavens)

Do you have something to say to me, old man?

HE (V.O.)

Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.

LUCE

(To the audience)

I think he's trying to warn you. Because heaven forbid you
think of me as anything other than a deceiver. A tempter.
Original Sin.

Beat. A moment

LUCE (CONT'D)

Come to think of it, if you possess any deeply-held religious
beliefs that your proximity to me is going to damn you to the
depths, feel free to show yourselves out. Though if it makes
you feel better, I can personally guarantee that if hell's
your goal, you'll have to try harder than that.

Beat shift



An expectant pause.

LUCE (CONT'D)

No takers? Good. So, then. Before we get underway, let's
dispel a few stereotypes, shall we?

(MORE)

} Unweildy
Maybe
change
wording?

No use "Psychotic."

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3.

LUCE (CONT'D)

First and foremost, I don't drink blood, nor do I accept human or animal sacrifice. Anyone who attempts any of those rites in my name is [psychotic] and should be treated as such. Second, I am not possessed of any of the following: horns, cloven hooves, a tail, blood red skin, or a pitchfork. Sorry to disappoint.

HE (V.O.)

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

LUCE

To be fair, I suppose he has your best interests at heart. But if you'll allow me to voice an opinion, I don't think he's very good at filling in the blanks. He spouts off all of these lovely poetic fortune cookie platitudes and then he expects humanity to translate them into good deeds.

Repetitive?

HE (V.O.)

Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not kill. Thou shalt not steal--

LUCE

Right, yes, I'm sure we're all familiar with your beloved commandments. Your story is, after all, the best-selling book in the world.

again (To the audience)

But then, ~~he hasn't exactly done a bang-up job, has he?~~
Adultery, murder and theft are all daily occurrences here on this big spinning orb we call home. And he's supposed to hate violence, ~~right?~~ So what went wrong?

after all?

A sudden, sharp pain seems to shake
LUCE to the core.

ADAM

(A shadow)

This is the havoc that you have wrought. It is on your head. Your head! Not ours!

ABEL

(A shadow)

The world is fallen to antipathy and avarice.

LUCE

(Reaching blindly for humor)

Forgive me...it's been one of those millennia. I'm sure you're all in quite a hurry to blame me for the "sorrows of the world" or what have you. And ~~I~~ I suppose I can't fault you for that. I'm not here to contest my role in the fall of man. But--I've gone all these centuries just accepting the slander, and the lies, and the flat-out misunderstanding of what I stand for.

HE (V.O.)

To those with anxious heart, take courage, fear not. Behold, your God will come with vengeance.

LUCE

Forced? → But what if He doesn't? It's always fallen to humans to overcome whatever obstacles you encounter. That's what makes you such a durable and resourceful species. You're like ants-- you band together and use whatever you have to triumph over nature. Isn't that something ants do? Don't ask me. I've always been more of a homosapien kind of guy.

HE (V.O.)

Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.

LUCE

He makes his living on promises. The promise that he watches over you. The promise that someday, all will be right in the world. Heaven, the afterlife, whatever you want to call it. Just a promise. But a promise would be worthless if there was no fear that it might be broken.

EVE and CAIN appear. Youthful,
hopeful, as they were before their
stories.

EVE

Would a sunrise seem beautiful without the pallor of night?

CAIN

The growth and harvest of summer would be fruitless were it not for the barren bleakness of the winter months.

LUCE

I know that there are injustices in the world that are too great to be justified. I will not claim otherwise. But yet...where would humanity be without these injustices? *Who* would you be?

CAIN retreats. ADAM looms.

ADAM

Paradise lost.

EVE recollects.

EVE

Vacancy found.

LUCE

It wasn't that idyllic, if you want my opinion. (Fruit trees are too high-maintenance.) See, that's the problem with Him-- always coming up with these grand lofty ideas and then leaving it to lesser beings to sort out the practicalities. + *line?*

ADAM

We lived out our days in peace.

LUCE

Otherwise known as boredom.

ADAM

And so you came to us, crawling on your belly, sneaking through the mud to corrupt us--

LUCE

Brush up your folklore. The snake is rebirth. Immortality. I wanted you to shed your skin and emerge new and whole into the world.

HE (V.O.)

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness."

LUCE

The perfect man. Residing in the perfect garden. No good or evil. No right or wrong. Just perfection. Whatever the hell that means.

45

Could this be the
↓ passage about creating
Eve?

6.

HE (V.O.)

Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman that
feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.

LUCE

Hasn't that ever bothered you? The King James Bible literally
calls Eve Adam's "help-meet." So for all you feminists out
there, guess what? According to the big man, you and your
entire gender is nothing but the help.

EVE practices.

EVE

"Sky." "Clouds." "Ants."

LUCE

(Watching EVE)

But I defy you to look at Eve and see something lesser.
Surrounded by a garden that ~~claimed to~~ supply its residents
with anything their hearts might desire, Eve wanted more. She
wondered. She dreamed.

LUCE approaches.

EVE

One of the beasts to be named?

LUCE

You might say that.

EVE

(Startled)

You speak! I never knew beasts could speak.

LUCE

Why not?

EVE

We are their shepherds.

LUCE

The Lord is your shepherd, and yet you can speak. Why not the
beasts?

EVE ponders.

charmed by? Maybe not
that, but maybe
something more
evocative

are you called?

EVE

What ~~is your name?~~

LUCE

I have none.

EVE

Adam has been commanded to

name all of the beasts—

LUCE

You are both "woman" and "Eve." Why must I simply be "snake?"

HE (V.O.)

And the Lord God said unto the serpent, "Because thou hast done this, upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life."

~~LUCE glares~~

EVE

Adam might give you a second name, if I was the one doing the asking.

LUCE

He'd probably think me selfish, not being satisfied with one.

EVE

"Selfish?"

"Oh right."

LUCE

(To audience)

Clean slate. Spotless record. Square one.

(To EVE)

It means thinking only of yourself. Not caring about other people.

EVE

But I think of myself. Am I--?

LUCE

That depends on whether you would act for your own benefit even if it would harm someone.

EVE

Adam is the only someone here...

(She considers)

(MORE)

EVE (CONT'D)

And I would never hurt him.

LUCE

Then you aren't selfish.

EVE broods.

A bird soars overhead.

EVE

Peculiar ~~beasts~~ ^{creatures}. Those who dwell in the fields are traceable, but the oceans and skies are boundless. I never know where they're off to.

LUCE

Perhaps it's going away.

EVE

To the other side of Eden?

LUCE

(What side?) It will fly until it tires and then it will alight wherever it is.

EVE

What could it want outside of Eden?

LUCE

Any number of things, I imagine.

EVE

Have you been?

LUCE

Outside? (Isn't Eden enough?)

EVE

Eden is beautiful...

LUCE

But?

EVE

But there must be more.

Loaded question

LUCE

(To the audience)

When you put a living thing inside walls--real or imaginary--they're going to wonder what's on the other side. Some people are content with the mystery, perhaps--

ADAM

(Looming)

Some knowledge is best left to fester.

LUCE

But others--most--will eventually scale the wall. Tear down the stones. Break through. It's human nature. *That*, at least, I accept no blame for. Long before the apple, Eve wanted more.

LUCE returns to EVE.

EVE

What did you want to show me?

More lead-in? Time passes.

LUCE

Just look up.

The sun rises.

EVE

There's so much light.

LUCE

From the heart of the garden, you can't see all the colors.

EVE

Fruit, and water, and grass and sky--and colors I'd never even known before!

LUCE

~~You see?~~ Not all beauty is contained in Eden.

EVE tears herself away.

EVE

But we should be content with what is there.

LUCE

There's nothing wrong with wanting to admire beauty.

EVE

It's selfish.

HE (V.O.)

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

LUCE

It isn't selfish.

ADAM

But the apple was.

LUCE stalls.

LUCE

(To the audience)

Did you know that the apple tree wasn't actually an apple tree? At the time, the word "apple" just meant "fruit." So it really could have been anything. An orange. A lime. Or what about a forbidden avocado?

ADAM

We are nothing more than amusements to you. But you ruined us. You filled our lives with corruption and condemned us to the dust!

LUCE

Thou shalt not bear false witness.

ADAM

You dare call me a liar?

LUCE

Is something a lie if the speaker isn't even aware of the truth? Is falsehood simply the hollowness of ignorant honesty?

EVE and ADAM together. ADAM'S hostility melts into tenderness.

EVE

How do the beasts' names come to you?

ADAM

I just pick what feels right.

EVE

And He chose all the celestial names--light, stars, the moon--

ADAM

All things glorious and greater than what graces this earth.
Just as He is.

EVE giggles.

Plucks a flower.

EVE

And this?

ADAM

We haven't come to the [foliage] yet.

Does this word exist yet?

EVE

What if I were to name it?

ADAM falters.

ADAM

I'm sure it would be a lovely name. But I don't think He--

EVE

You could pretend you made it up.

ADAM

I don't think I can deceive him that way. We can ask Him soon. But I can't in good faith make a decision without His approval.

ADAM tucks the flower behind EVE'S ear and leaves her.

EVE reflects.

She joins LUCE.

EVE

Would you like a name?

LUCE

What?

(Of - would I -

Love how
this
reads.

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12.

EVE

Something beautiful. Something fitting your kindness towards me.

LUCE

You think I'm kind...?

EVE

I'd never know a sunrise if it weren't for you...you brought light into Eden for me. But all things glorious and greater than this earth are chosen. So I just...made something up that sounded like it might have been the name for light, or the sunrise, or stars.

LUCE anticipates.

LUCE

What is it?

EVE

Lucifer. Your name is Lucifer.

A moment of ^{shared} completion.

LUCE:

~~LUCE embraces EVE.~~

Lucifer..

~~EVE stiffens a moment, then returns the gesture.~~

EVE (CONT'D)

(Softly)

You're welcome.

LUCE alone.

LUCE

(To the audience)

I've shortened it since, of course. Lucifer just sounds so-- biblical. "Luce" has more of a modern flair, don't you think?

LUCE considers.

LUCE (CONT'D)

...and I never knew if...that is, I never got to ask her--

LUCE takes up the forbidden fruit.

EVE approaches.

EVE

Where did you get that?

LUCE

I know what you're thinking.

EVE

Adam says that's forbidden.

LUCE

Is that the only reason you won't?

EVE

He says it's forbidden.

LUCE

Why give you the choice, then?

EVE

What do you--

mean

LUCE

If He didn't want you considering it, why would He have put it in the garden in the first place?

EVE is faltering.

EVE

Adam says we're not capable of understanding what He chooses to--

LUCE

Adam is content to never question the significance of a forbidden fruit left within reach. But you, Eve...you see the beauty in the flight of a bird and the rising sun. You know that there can be more. You have the power to change everything--for the rest of ~~eternity~~, maybe.

EVE

mankind?

How do you know that what's out there is worth it?

LUCE

That's the wonder of it. I don't. It could be anything. You could *make* it anything.

EVE

Fresh start.

LUCE

Brave new world.

EVE

No divine intervention..

EVE dreams.

EVE (CONT'D)

But isn't it selfish?

LUCE

(...difficult truth, or preferable lie?

EVE

Truth.

LUCE

It is selfish. But with a little selfishness, Eve...who knows? One choice, and the world might become *more* than perfect.

EVE

Or less.

LUCE

~~Or less.~~ Or, more likely, a mixture of the two. But isn't the possibility worth the risk?

EVE considers.

She accepts the forbidden fruit.

LUCE stands away, observing. EVE presents the fruit to ADAM.

EVE

My mind is made up.

ADAM

You can't--

EVE
Trying to stop me will only make you [sad.] weird word

ADAM
He will punish us.

EVE
You don't know that.

ADAM
Neither do you. Anything could happen.

EVE relishes the thought.

EVE
Yes. Anything.

EVE almost eats the forbidden fruit.

ADAM
What if He sends you away?

EVE
Then I'll know what's out there.

ADAM
But what will I do?

EVE
Whatever He wants you to do, I suppose. Whatever you did before I was here.

Again EVE raises the fruit to her lips.

ADAM
Why don't we simply ask Him what's outside of Eden? If you're just curious--

EVE
Adam.

ADAM
It's forbidden!